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REPORT OF THE CURATORS.

The Curators present the following statement of the Curator-in-Charge, Prof. Heilprin, as their report for the year 1888:—

The Curator-in-Charge respectfully reports that the collections of the Academy are in good condition, and that their status, as far as classification and arrangement are concerned, has been materially improved during the year. As heretofore, the Academy has profited largely through the work of volunteer specialists, and is hence placed under special obligation to those who have thus generously contributed their time and assistance. To Mr. J. H. Redfield, Conservator of the herbarium, and to Mr. Thomas Meehan, it is almost wholly indebted for the careful work that is being systematically applied toward the expansion and proper distribution of the botanical collections; while to the officers of the Entomological Section and of the American Entomological Society it is placed under obligation for work done in connection with the department of entomology. In the death of Mr. George W. Tryon, Jr., its Conservator in the department of conchology for thirteen years, the Academy has lost one of its truest and most efficient members—one who had for a full quarter of a century given much of his daily time to the interests of the institution. That the department will feel for some time the want of his vast experience, and the absence of his governing influence, there can be no question; but it is hoped that under the special direction of the new conservator, Mr. H. A. Pilsbry, and of the Conchological Section, it will be kept in that commanding position which it has so firmly and justly held.

In the departments other than those here specified the work has been done almost wholly under the direction of the Curator-in-Charge and his assistant, Mr. J. E. Ives. As in preceding years the alcoholics have been completely overhauled, and it is satisfactory to be able to report that there has been practically no loss in this part of the Academy's collections since the preparation of the last annual statement. It is less agreeable to report that during the latter part of the present year several attempts to force the ornithological cases have been made, with the result of robbing the collection of some 200 specimens of South American and Australian birds, mainly representatives of the family *Tanagridæ*. The greater number of these have been recovered, and it now seems that the full loss resolves itself to possibly not more than a half-dozen specimens. A change

in the construction of the locks is urgently needed, and it is recommended that steps looking toward the greater security of the cases be immediately taken. The ornithological collections have largely profited during the year through the labors of Mr. Witmer Stone, who has, amidst other work, very carefully reviewed the extensive and intricate family of the *Tanagridæ*, and determined the greater number of the species that belong to this group. His work shows that the Academy's representation is a very full one, falling, in point of species, but little short of that of the British Museum. A numerical estimate of the entire collection of mounted birds in the Academy shows it to comprise somewhat more than 23,000 specimens; in addition to this there is a collection of some 3000 skins.

The work of systematically cataloguing this vast collection has been begun, but much time must necessarily elapse before such a catalogue can be satisfactorily completed.

The entire museum collection of minerals has been rearranged during the year, the specimens of the different mineral species being distributed strictly according to geographical position. This method, it is believed, will largely facilitate comparative study. The Wm. S. Vaux collection continues to receive the close and valuable superintendence of its special Conservator, Mr. Jacob Binder, through whom it has been brought into a condition of rare completeness. A large proportion of the more commanding specimens which now distinguish the collection have been obtained through purchase on the special selection and recommendation of the Conservator.

In most of the other departments of the museum the work has been mainly of a general character. Mr. Ives, under the direction of the Curator-in-Charge, has very carefully reviewed and redetermined the species of *Ophiuroidea* and *Asteroidea*, and thereby added very materially to the extent of the collection represented. Two new species, a *Pteraster* and a *Coronaster*, were determined.

By a resolution of Council of April it was recommended that a hand-book of the Museum be prepared by the Curator-in-Charge, in conjunction with the members of the Board of Curators. In conformity with this recommendation the Curator-in-Charge has devoted much time toward the preparation of such a hand-book, and it gives him pleasure to report that the same is now almost finished and ready to go to press. It is herewith submitted for approval to the Board of Curators.

The additions to the museum during the year—detailed in the accompanying list of donations—have been both abundant and import-

ant. Through the kindness of Dr. H. C. Chapman the Academy has received a fine selection of marine invertebrates from Bar Harbor, Maine, many species of which had not hitherto been represented in the general collection. The Zoological Society of Philadelphia has also contributed largely in material from their gardens, and thereby filled in many gaps that could not otherwise be readily closed.

The trip to the Bermuda Islands which was planned by the Curator-in-Charge, and toward which the Academy generously contributed its assistance, proved successful beyond anticipation, and has resulted in placing in the Academy's museum a large and important collection of sub-tropical marine forms, the greater number of which are now for the first time represented, and many of which are new to science. The results of the expedition, which are now in course of publication in the Academy's Proceedings, prove what benefits may be derived from zoo-geographical research of this kind, undertaken with only moderate expense, and with no special preparation. The value of this form of scientific research has been indicated in previous reports, and attention is once more directed to the advisability of endowing a moderate zoo-geographical research fund, the interest from which should be expended annually in the exploration of the numerous regions which still await investigation. It is believed that no other method could be suggested which would yield such important scientific results, and at the same time render the Academy a virtual centre of scientific activity in the country.

The Curator-in-Charge again desires to call attention to the absolute need of an extension to the present accommodations; the existing conditions are becoming more serious every year, and render a change, if the efficiency of the institution is not to be lessened, imperative. The collections can no longer be advantageously increased, nor can they be satisfactorily cared for in their restricted quarters. Portions of the library are being gradually encroached upon, and the work-rooms are all filled. The need for a suitable lecture-hall or amphitheatre is pressing, and the same is true of special students' rooms and laboratories. It is earnestly hoped that the generous public of this city, who have so kindly lent their assistance before, will not allow the most important institution of the kind in the country to go in want. The attempts to obtain aid from the State, although often repeated, have thus far proved abortive; but an effort will again be made during the coming session of the Legislature.

Attention is again called to the important question of Sunday opening. The numerous requests for admission into the museum on Sundays clearly speak the public mind, or at any rate, the wish of a large number of the city's inhabitants. The Academy of the Fine Art and the Zoological Society have set an example in the right direction, and there seems to be no reason, beyond an inadequacy of funds to maintain such opening, why our Academy should not follow the lead. Sunday-opening would certainly be a charity to that large body of useful citizens whose daily employment debars them from the advantages which the institution otherwise offers.

During the year specimens for study have been loaned to Prof. R. P. Whitfield, of New York; to Prof's. Osborn and Scott, of Princeton; to Dr. G. Baur, of New Haven; to Dr. George Marx, of Washington; and to Dr. Harrison Allen, of this city.

Respectfully submitted,

ANGELO HEILPRIN,

Curator-in-Charge.

JOSEPH LEIDY,

Ch'n Curators.

REPORT OF THE CURATOR OF THE WILLIAM S. VAUX COLLECTIONS.

The Curator of the William S. Vaux Collections respectfully submits his sixth annual report to the Council of the Academy.

The collections are in good order and condition, the only change made since the report of 1887, being the introduction of one hundred and two specimens purchased within the year and added to the collection. These specimens have been purchased at a cost of \$420.10.

The collections now consist of the following:—

No. of minerals reported 1887,	6,786
No. of minerals purchased 1888,	102
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Total,	6,888
Archæological specimens (same as reported in 1887),	2,940